

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AND HER MISSION NO. 1678

**A SERMON
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BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

"And upon this came His disciples, and marveled that He talked with the woman; yet no man said, What seek You? or, Why talk You with her? The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and said to the men, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto Him."
John 4:27-30.

BEHOLD our Lord and Master with divinely skillful art seeking after a single soul! We must have large congregations or we are disinclined for soul-winning. The habit of the age is to do nothing but what is ostentatious; every work must be with beat of drum or sound of tambourine. I pray that the Lord may work in us the steadfast desire to do good on the quiet, by stealth, when no one looks on, when not a single disciple is near. Oh that we may have such an estimate of the value of a single soul that we count whole days well spent to bring one fallen woman or one drunk to the Savior's feet. Blessed is he who works on though he is never heard of, and looks for his reward from his Master. In the heat of the day the Lord Jesus found rest and refreshment in speaking to one whom many would scarcely look upon, except with eyes of scorn. Blessed Savior, we do not marvel as the disciples did that You did speak with the woman, but we do wonder with a higher kind of astonishment that You ever did speak to the likes of us, who have so sadly fallen, and done You dishonor, and grieved Your heart. We are amazed that He who is the glory of heaven, "Light of light, very God of very God," should shroud Himself in the likeness of sinful flesh, and being found in fashion as a man should seek after us unworthy ones. Oh, the compassion of the Redeemer's heart!

Read this chapter through carefully, and see the skill which that compassion taught Him. How sweetly ready He was to converse with her and to take up her questions. Never imagine that the thirty years of retirement at Nazareth were wasted. I would gladly go, if I were young, for thirty years to learn how to talk as He did, if His own Spirit would teach me the lesson. He was a perfect teacher because *as man* He had lent a willing ear to the heavenly instruction of the Holy Spirit, and therefore grew in knowledge and fitness for His work. As says that notable Scripture, "The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakens morning by morning, He wakens My ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God has opened My ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back." By communion with God in private, and by watching men in seclusion, He learned both the mind of God and the nature of man, so as to know how to handle the human mind. Men are "unpredictable cattle," and can only be managed by a wise hand. Many an earnest fool has driven a soul to hell in his endeavor to drag it to heaven by force, for human wills yield not to such rough force, but rebel the more. Souls have to be brought to salvation by gentleness and wisdom such as the Savior used when He fascinated the Samaritan woman into eternal life, and enticed her to the truth, so I can only describe that wondrous power which He exercised over her in the few short but blessed sentences with which He addressed her.

Now, turn a moment from that glorious One, that perfect man, and yet infinite God, whom we would lovingly adore before we look away from Him. Here come His disciples! They have been in the city to buy food—an errand most necessary—that they and their Teacher might live. But look! *When they perceive Him talking with a woman they marvel,* each in his own way. Some are dumfounded, and cannot explain the phenomenon. Others look as if they would interpose if they dared, and would cry to the woman, "Away you vixen, what right have you here, speaking to such a One as our Leader, whose shoelaces even we are not worthy to unloose? Your approach dishonors Him. Take yourself away." They did say so with their eyes, though awe of their Lord restrained their tongues, for these disciples of Jesus

were steeped in the customary antipathies of the age. First, it was sufficiently offensive that the person with whom Jesus was conversing was a woman. My beloved sisters, you owe much to the gospel, for it is only by its agency that you are raised to your proper place. For what said the Rabbis? "Rather burn the sayings of the law than teach them to women." And again, "Let no man prolong conversation with a woman. Let no one converse with a woman in the streets, not even with his own wife." Women were thought to be unfit for profound religious instruction, and altogether inferior beings. My sisters, we do not think that you are superior to us, though some of you perhaps fancy so, but we are right glad to acknowledge your equality, and to know that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female. Jesus has lifted you up to your true place, side by side with man. Even the apostles were tainted at first with that horrible superstition which made them marvel that Jesus openly talked with a woman. Moreover, they wondered that He could talk with such a woman! I do not suppose they knew all about her character, but there is a look about the fallen which betrays them, they cannot conceal the boldness which a course of vice usually produces. They may have thought, "If He had talked with an aged matron, a saintly mother in Israel, it might not have been surprising, but how can He converse with such a woman?" They did not as yet understand His mission to rescue the perishing and save the lost. This poor woman also had the misfortune to be a Samaritan, and above all things Jews hated Samaritans, as aliens and heretics, who dared to call Jacob their father and to believe themselves orthodox. Jews and Samaritans were much alike, and you know the sects that approach nearest to each other usually reserve their most bitter hatred for their next of kin. They will tolerate those who are far removed from them, because they are altogether in the darkness of error, and so are somewhat excusable. But those who have so much light, they detest for not seeing eye to eye with themselves. We pity a mute man, for he cannot speak at all, but we are indignant that one who can say, "Sibboleth," will not take a little more trouble and pronounce it, "Shibboleth," as we do. Surely he might go that other inch and be quite right. This woman was one of those Samaritan heretics who had dared to set up an opposition temple to the one at Jerusalem, and say that they also were the people of God, so the disciples shrank from her, and marveled that Jesus did not do the same. How could so good a man mix Himself up with such people? I have myself heard a great deal of foolishness spoken about mixing up with certain people, because we dare to meet with them upon some common ground to accomplish a right purpose. I have sometimes wondered whether people ever read of Abraham, when he fought for the cause of the king of Sodom. A horrible man, I have no doubt, that monarch was, yet when his country had been plundered by the invading kings, Abraham marched out on behalf of the King of Sodom, not that he cared for him, but that he desired to deliver his nephew Lot. For that reason he is found in some measure of association with Sodom's king, but when the object upon which they were united was achieved, then see how the princely Abraham washes his hands of the man. He says, "I will not take from you a thread even to a shoe-lace, lest you should say, 'I have made Abraham rich.'" Thus there may be a temporary union among men, between whom there is the widest difference, and this apparent unity may be lawful and expedient because the end to be gained is altogether good. Our blessed Lord was seeking the good of this unholy woman, and therefore He was fully justified in talking with her. Thereby He rebuked the superstition of His followers more effectually than by words.

There is another side to the question. How could these disciples marvel that He spoke with anybody, after having chosen *them* and called *them*? Surely, when they frowned on others they forgot the dung-hills where they grew. If they had only remembered where they were when He found them, and how often they had grieved Him by their perverseness, they would have reserved their surprise for their own cases. Ah, brethren, ever since the Lord spoke with me, I have never marveled that He spoke with anybody. It has not crossed my mind to make it any subject of wonder that He should stoop to the lowest and humblest now that He has stooped to me. Yet I fancy I have seen in certain brethren, evident signs that they forget that they were themselves once strangers in Egypt. They forget that grace washed and cleansed them, or else they would have been filthy still, for Paul truly says, "such were some of you." I am sorry when saved ones affect superfine purity and marvelous spirituality, and turn away from such as Jesus would have welcomed. Alas, such disciples have little of the tenderness of their Master! Our divine Lord has more tenderness for sinners than the whole of us put together. There is more love in His soul towards lost ones than there is in all these thousands of believers here present, though I hope that many of your hearts beat high with a loving desire that the guilty may be delivered from the wrath to

come. But look at the disciples! Look, yonder is John, that sweet-souled John, and yet he marvels. And there is Peter, good but faulty, and he marvels. And there is Thomas the thoughtful, and he marvels. They are all good men, and yet they are marveling that Jesus is gracious to a poor woman. Oh, Peter, and John, and James, and the rest of you, look into your own hearts, and let a glance of the Holy Spirit lighten up the darkness of your spirits, and you will renounce this self-righteous marveling which grieves the woman, and you will enter into deeper sympathy with your Lord's love. Dear friends, let us never disdain the worst of men or women, but seek with all our might to woo and win them for our Lord. Oh, to have hearts of mercies as Jesus had! This will well become the followers of the compassionate Son of man.

Look, as the result of this conduct of the disciples, *one of the sweetest conferences that were ever held was broken up*, and brought to a close at its very climax. Just when Jesus had said, "I that speak unto you am He," then it must end, for here they come, these cold, unsympathetic ones. Yet they were disciples, were they not? Oh, yes, and true disciples, too, but alas, no breakers of communion are more blamable or more frequent in the offense than Christ's own disciples when they are out of sympathy with their Master. You see, they are thinking about the meat, and about the Savior's need of it, and these thoughts were most proper, but not very elevated or spiritual, and they come wondering that Jesus speaks with a woman, and so the holy conference ends, and the woman must go. Oh, when any of you draw near to Christ, and He is just lifting the silver veil from His dear face, and your eyes are beginning to behold Him, mind that you keep your door shut. "Oh, but it is a good man at the door." Yes, but he will be just as likely to mar your fellowship as anybody else. The best of men may sometimes intrude between you and the Well-beloved, and fellowship which seemed as if it must mellow into heaven itself, will come to a speedy and sorrowful close. I do not blame Peter that he wanted tabernacles in which to remain upon the top of the mount, for he was pretty well aware of what he might meet upon the plain. Do you not often wish that you could sing—

*"Sequestered from the noise and strife,
The lust, the pomp, and pride of life;
For heaven I will my heart prepare,
And have my conversation there."*

Although the conference was thus broken up, the consequence was the Lord's glory, even as often out of evil He works good. Since the woman cannot sit and gaze upon the divine face of her Lord, nor hear the strange music which flowed from His blessed lips, she will give herself to holy activity, she goes her way to the city, and she speaks to the men. This is well, there is little to deplore when men's hearts are so right that you cannot take them away from glorifying Christ, do what you may. When, if you disturb their private communion, they are ready at once for public service. Driven away from sitting, like Mary, at the Master's feet, let us rise to play the Martha, by preparing a table for the Lord. Always reckon, dear friends, whenever you are taken off from your usual course of life, as it were by a jolt, that, the Lord has some special work for you to do. Do not fret, or try to back the engine to get on the old lines again. No, if the switch is turned by the divine hand, go on, He that has the management of all the railroads of your life knows better which way your soul should go than you yourself can know. I have observed Christian people jerked out of a pious family where they were extremely happy, and placed in the midst of ungodliness, a situation not of their own choosing or seeking, but appointed of the Lord, that they may bring godliness into that house, and shed light in the midst of the darkness. Friend, you, too, may be taken away from this church where your soul has flourished, and you may feel like one banished and bereaved. Well, never mind. If you are sent to some church where everything is dreary, and dead, go there like a firebrand to set them on fire. Your Lord would not have permitted the breaking up of your peace unless He had some high service for you. Since you are His servant, find out His will, and do it. God will thus honor Himself in you, and by and by He will honor and comfort you also.

Observe that *the woman now becomes a messenger for Christ*. She has to quit conferring with Him to go and testify *about* Him. She did not go unbidden though, for she remembered that the Lord had said at an early period of the conversation, "Go, call your husband and come here." So she goes to call her husband. It is well to have a warrant for what we do. Observe, she interprets her orders very liberally. She thought as the Christ had said, "You have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband," He could not have limited her errand to one who was not her husband except in name,

and so she might as well call any of the six men with whom she had dwelt, and therefore she might speak to all the men who were loitering about the public square, and tell them what she had seen. Remember how our Savior gave a large interpretation of His own prophetic mission. He was not sent as a teacher except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but He went to the very edge of His diocese, if He did not go over it. He went to the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and when a woman came out of those parts, He had healing for her daughter, though He did sow most of His seed upon the acres of the Holy Land, yet He made it fly over the boundary. In fact, He sowed all the ages, and on this once barbarous island there have fallen blessed handfuls which are bringing forth fruit to His glory. Always go to the verge of your commission, never stop short of it. Try to do more good than you can, and it is very possible that you will be successful. Indeed, if you only try to do what you can do you will do little. But when in faith you attempt what you cannot alone accomplish, God will be at your back, and in your weakness His strength shall be made clear.

Notice that *the woman leaves her waterpot*. The Spirit of God thought well to record this circumstance, and therefore I think there must be a measure of teaching in it. She left her waterpot, first, for speed. Perhaps you have got it into your head that it was an ordinary English waterpot, such as you water the garden with, possibly you so picture it, rose and all. Nothing of the sort, it was a big jar, or large pitcher of earthenware, she had to carry on her head or her shoulder, quite a load for her, and so she left it that she might run the more quickly. She was a wise woman to leave her waterpot when she needed to move rapidly. Others think she did so because she was so taken up with her errand that she forgot her pitcher. It is blessed forgetfulness which comes of absorption in a holy design. When the King's business requires haste, it is wise to leave behind everything that would hinder. Our Lord Jesus Himself forgot His hunger in His zeal to guide a soul to peace, and it is said of Him in the Psalm, "I forgot to eat My bread." He was so absorbed in His heavenly work that He said, "I have meat to eat that you know not of." A man has hardly felt the power of eternal things unless at times he forgets some earthly matters. If a man is called to rush for his life through a room full of crockery there will, probably, be a number of breakages. You cannot think of everything at once, your mind is limited, and it is not advisable that you should divide the strength of your thoughts by having two or more aims. So she left her waterpot. Without thought she hit upon as good an action as thought would have suggested. The waterpot would have hindered her, but it might be useful to the Christ and His disciples. Thus they could give Him to drink. He was thirsty, and probably so were they, and with her pitcher they could help themselves. Besides, it was a pledge that she was coming back. She said thereby, "I am running away on an errand, but I shall come back again. I have not listened to the great Teacher for the last time. I shall return, and hear Him further, till I know Him better and trust Him more fully." So it was significant that she left her waterpot. Sometimes you will have to leave your shop to win a soul. You will cast up a row of figures wrongly, and wonder why, and the reason will be that before your mind there fluttered the soul of a swearer or the figure of a drunk, or the image of a fallen woman, and your heart was filled with the longing to find the lost sheep. Never mind. I dare say the woman had her water pot again, and you will get back to business, again, and rectify your blunder, and attend to the shop, and set all matters right, and if a soul is saved you will have made a profit by any loss you have sustained.

We have started the woman on her mission. Now I want you to *observe particularly her mode of address*, for there is teaching here. She said to the men, "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Observe first, when she did go back to the men, she had but one aim, and that was to bring them to Jesus. She cries, "Come, see." She did not tell them anything about their sin at the time, nor try to reform their habits. She called them at once to Him who could set them right. She knew that if she could bring them to Christ all things would inevitably come right. It is good for you to shoot only at one target. Choose your design and aim at it, and not at two objects. Drive away at the souls of men in the name of God to get them to Christ, and nothing short of Him. Labor for this; be willing to live for this, and to die for this, that men may be saved by Immanuel's love, and blood, and Spirit. This Samaritan woman aimed at this object and tried to gain it by an exceedingly earnest address. I warrant you she said it very prettily, "Come, come, come, and see a man that told me all things that ever I did." Perhaps with all her charms, with all the softness of her winsome tongue, with all the entreaty of her bright eyes, she cried, "Come, every one of you; come, see for yourselves, a man which told me all things that ever I did." If you go upon the Lord's errands take your heart with you. Speak every single

syllable earnestly, and if you are thoroughly alive you will not need to be taught the way of doing it. The way comes naturally to those whose hearts are set upon the end.

She spoke self-forgetfully, she seemed entirely to have forgotten herself, and yet she remembered herself—a paradox, but not a contradiction. She said, “Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did.” She quoted herself, and yet if she had thought of herself, she would not have said a word on the subject of her own life. She might have feared that the men would have replied—“A pretty story that must be!” They knew her well, and might have turned round and said, “You are a beauty, to come here and talk to us in this style!” No, she let them talk of her as they pleased. “Come; see a man which told me all things that ever I did.” That putting aside of all affectation, that genuine simplicity, was part of her power. Never try to be otherwise than you are. If you have been a great sinner, be ashamed of it, but do not be ashamed of that love which saved you from it, so as to refuse to bear witness to its power. Put away the thought of what people will think of you, and only look to what they will think of Jesus for having forgiven and renewed you.

Note how short she was. Ralph Erskine calls her the female preacher. I am not so sure of the correctness of the title. If women preached just as long as she did, and no longer, no one could find fault with them. Her testimony lies all in one verse, and is an invitation and a question. There needed no more words, no, not another half a word. She said exactly enough, for she was successful in leading the men to Jesus, who could do the preaching far better than she could. I cannot call her words a sermon, at any rate you would not care for me to preach so briefly. However, brevity is a great virtue. Do not crave to be fluent, only ask to be earnest.

Then, how vivacious she was, “Come, see a man,” the words are all alive, and very far from being dull and heavy. “Come, see.” It is almost as laconic as Julius Caesar’s famous dispatch, “I came, I saw, I conquered.” “Come; see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?”

Then, it was so sensible. There is a dispute about the exact force of what the woman said, but most of those who give us precise translations differ from our common version. It is what she meant and believed, but not exactly what she said. She probably said, “Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: Can this be the Christ?”—or, “This is not the Christ, is He?” She did not say He was, but she suggested it with great modesty for the men to examine. She believed that Jesus was the Christ, but she knew that men do not like to be taught by such as her, and so she humbly threw it out for their examination. “Can this be the anointed One whom we are expecting? Come and judge.” She did not express all she believed, lest she should provoke them to opposition, she was adroit and wise. She fished after the manner of her Master; for she could not but feel how dexterously He had fished for her. She was an apt scholar, and humbly copied the Friend who had blessed her, “Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did: can this possibly be the Christ?” This led them to come, if it was only to set the woman right. Possibly they thought her a poor, mistaken woman, but in their superior wisdom, they would look into the matter, and so the thing she desired was granted her. Oh, to have our wits about us for Jesus!

But the argument is exceedingly strong; let her put it how she may. “This man has told me all things that ever I did.” She might have said, if she thought it wise to say it, “He must be the Christ,” and that is my last point, namely, the grand argument drawn from herself, and adapted to the men. Observe the force of her reasoning. His power to read her heart, and manifest her to herself, was conclusive evidence to her that a special anointing was upon Him.

But before I get at that I must have you examine more fully the whole of the woman’s little message, of which it was a part. It divides itself into two parts. You have been looking for firstly and secondly all this while, and now you shall have them. There are two parts in her sermon. The first is *the invitation*, “Come; see a man which told me all things that ever I did.” The second is *the argument*, “Is not this the Christ?”

I. Consider at once THE INVITATION. It is a clever as well as a genuine and hearty invitation. She says, “Come, see.” This was putting it most fairly, and men like a fair proposal and the Holy Spirit works by means which suit the mind. She does not say, “You must and shall believe what I say.” No, no, she is too sensible. She says, “Come and see for yourselves,” and that is exactly what I want to say to every unconverted person here this morning. My Lord Jesus is the most precious Savior that I ever dreamed of. Come and test Him! He is altogether lovely, and He has blessed my soul unspeakably, but I do not want you to believe because of my saying, come and see for yourselves. Can anything be fairer?

Seek Him by prayer. Trust Him by faith. Test His gospel for yourselves. It is an old-fashioned exhortation, "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good," and again, "Prove Me now, says the Lord of hosts." In fact, this is Christ's own word to the first disciples, "Come and see," and they used it when pleading with others, saying to them, "Come and see."

Moreover, this woman's invitation throws the responsibility upon them. She says, "Come and see." Thus I would say to you—if you do not come and see, I cannot help it, and I cannot help you either. I cannot stand sponsor for you, use your own judgments and clear your own consciences. Come and see on your own accounts. If you do not, then the blame must rest with you. If you do, then your personal investigation will be sure to end in a blessing. O dear hearers, I may preach the gospel to you, but I cannot go to Christ in your place. It is mine to entreat and persuade, and to use every kind of means by which I may get you to the Savior, but it is a personal matter with each of you. Oh that the Holy Spirit would lead you to come yourselves to Jesus, for it must be your own act and deed through His blessed working upon your nature. *You* must come, *you* must repent, *you* must believe, *you* must lay hold on eternal life for yourselves. Nothing but personal religion can possibly save you. The woman's call was a good exhortation in that respect.

Then, is it not pleasantly put, so as to prove the sympathy of the speaker? She does not say, as she might have said, "Go, see a man." No, "Come, see a man," as much as to say, "Come along. I will go with you and lead the way. You shall not say I have seen enough of Him and do not care to go again, and now want to send you packing there alone because I am tired of Him. No, come! Come along. Come with me—we will all go together. The more I have seen of Him the more I want to see. Come, see the wondrous man." Dear friends, when you try to win a soul, do not try the "go" system, but use the "come" system. When man cries, "I cannot go to Christ," or, "I will not go to Christ," look at him through your tears and cry out, "Friend, I am a sinner like yourself, and have no hope but in the precious blood of Jesus. Come, let me pray with you. Let us go to Jesus together." Then, when you pray, do not say, "Lord, I am one of your saints, and come to you bringing this sinner." That may be true, but it is not a wise way of speaking. Cry, "Lord, here are two sinners that deserve Your wrath, and we come to ask You in Your pity to give the Savior to us, and renew our hearts by Your Spirit." That is the way God helps soul-winners to draw others. When we say, "Come," let us lead the way ourselves. What you wish another to do it will be wise to do yourself, for example has more power than precept. How would you like the sinner to turn round upon you and say, "You may well give away advice when you do not intend to use it yourself." No, but "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did." A sister's heart spoke out in that word, "Come."

Again, what a blessed vanishing of the speaker there is. I have heard of brethren whose preaching is spoiled because they are so self-conscious. The man wishes you to feel that he is speaking in first-rate style, and is an eminent divine. When he has finished, the common exclamation is, "I never heard such a clever man." But he was not as wise as he might have been or should have been, for he who preaches rightly makes you forget himself. In fact, the observation about him, if it comes out at all, is in this fashion—"I did not detect any eloquence; anybody might have talked like that, but somehow I have felt as I never felt before." The fish knows little about the angler, but he knows when he has swallowed the hook. When the truth has gone right home to the hearer's heart, the form of speech is of little consequence. This woman does not say anything to make the Samaritan men admire her, but she draws them to Jesus with the exhortation, "Come, see a man." What she does mention about herself is with the design of extolling the Savior. That is a grand sentence of John the Baptist, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Less, less, less of John, that there may be all the more of Christ. There is but one great universe, and Christ and you are in it. The more space you occupy, there must be so much the less for Jesus. When you get less and less there is more for Jesus, and when you reach the vanishing point then Jesus is all in all, and that is exactly what you should aim at. This sensible woman's invitation deserves to be copied by every worker.

II. Now for THE ARGUMENT, with which I close.

An argument lies concealed here, and if you look at the text a minute or two you will discover it. She conceals it because she is persuaded that they have already agreed to it. It is this, "If Jesus is the Christ, the anointed, then it is fit that you should come with me and see Him." She does not argue that point, because every Samaritan agreed to it. If Jesus is the Christ then we ought to go and listen to Him, look at

Him and become His followers. Alas, my dear hearers, I am obliged to urge that argument with many of you, because you are not as practical as these Samaritans. You believe that Jesus is the Christ, I suppose every man and woman of you does that. Why, then, do you not believe in Him as your Savior? You never had a doubt about His Godhead, why is He not your God? "If I tell you the truth," says Christ, "why do you not believe Me?" If this is the Anointed One whom God has sent to take away the sins of men, why have you not sought Him that He may rid you of your sins? If this is the propitiation which God has set forth, why have you not accepted this propitiation? If this is the fountain wherein sin can be washed away, why are you not washed? There is no reason in your course of action, it is illogical and irrational. If there is a Savior, the man who is taught right reason vows that he will have Him. If there is a fountain that can wash away sin, he resolves to be washed in it, if he can get right with God by any process, he hastens to be rectified. I say, this woman did not argue the point, because it did not need arguing. It goes without saying and there let it stand.

But what she did argue was this, "This man who was just now sitting on the well, is He not the Christ?" How did she prove it? First, she did as good as say, "He must be Christ, *because He has revealed me to myself*, He has told me all things that ever I did." The words are wide. Stop, dear woman, surely He has not revealed all your life, certainly not in words. He has revealed your unchastity, but nothing else. But she was right. Were you ever out in a black and murky night when a single lightning flash has come? It has only struck one oak in the field, but in so doing it has revealed all the landscape. It struck one object, but all around you was light as day for the moment. So, when the Lord Jesus Christ revealed this woman's lustfulness, she saw clearly the whole of her life at a single view, and the Lord had indeed told her all things that ever she did. Do you wonder that she said, "Is not this the Christ?"

Beloved, no one proves Himself to be truly anointed unless He begins by showing you your sins. If any teacher leads you to hope that, without repentance, or any sense of sin, you may be saved, he is not of Christ. I charge you; fling away any hope which is not consistent with your own entire hopelessness apart from Jesus. If you have not known yourself a sinner, you cannot know Christ as a Savior. Some are preaching nowadays a dry-eyed faith, and men seem to jump into assurance as if there were no new birth, no conviction of sin, and no repentance. But it is not so, "You must be born again." That birth is not without pangs. Trust in Christ brings a hatred of sin and mourning because of it. A man cannot hate what he does not know, but this woman was made to see her sin, and that sight proved that the Messiah was dealing with her. The non-repentance prophets cry, "Peace, peace," where there is no peace. They film the sore, but Jesus puts the knife into it, lays it wide open, and makes the patient see the gangrene of the wound, and then He closes it up, and with His heavenly ointment makes a sure cure of it. There is no binding up the heart that was never broken. There is no comforting a man who has always been comfortable. There is no making a man righteous who always was righteous. There is no washing a man who has no filthiness. No, and this is what the Messiah does, He lays bare the disease, and this is a proof that He is sent of God, because He does not adopt the flimsy, flattering mode of deceivers, but goes straight to the truth. Her argument is—He must be the Messiah, for He revealed me to myself.

Secondly, *He must be the Messiah, for He has revealed Himself to me*. "No sooner did I see my filthiness than I saw at once that He was every way ready to cleanse me." A sinner's eye is never ready to see the Savior till first it has seen the sin. When the man sees despair written across the face of human strength, then he turns and sees hope mildly beaming from the kind eyes of the Son of man, but not till then. Jesus has revealed Himself, and now she says, "I see that He knows me and knows all about me." Wonderful it is how the gospel robe exactly fits a man, when he gets it and puts it on he feels that He who made this garment knew His form. Perhaps you have some special weakness or singular deformity, but you soon perceive that Jesus knew all about it, for His salvation exactly meets the lack. There is a bath, ah, He knew I was filthy. There is a robe, ah, He knew I was naked. There is eye salve; He knew that I was blind. Here is a ring for my finger; He knew I wanted a forget-me-not to keep me in memory of mercy received. Here are shoes for my bare feet, and a banquet for my griping hunger. Every need is taken care of, and this proves the omniscience of my Savior. "Therefore," she said, "He knows all about me. He must be infinitely wise; He must be the Christ." This is good arguing, is it not?

Then she seemed to say to them too, "This is a great deal more to me than it can be to you, *for He has dealt personally with me*, and therefore I abide in my assurance that He is the Christ. But go and learn the same arguments for yourselves." Brethren, if the Lord Jesus Christ had told this woman all that

ever her third husband did, it would have had far less power over her than telling her all she had done herself. When conviction comes personally home, and the discovery is all about your own state and character, it has a special power over your heart and mind to make you say, "This is the Christ." Also, my brethren, at the remembrance of my Lord's surgery when I was wounded and sorely broken, I am ready to cry, "See how He handled me. Never was a hand so strong and yet so tender, never a physician with such a lion's heart, and such a lady's hand. I can feel His strength as He holds me up and I can feel His tenderness as He embraces me. Surely He is the Anointed, and sent of the Lord to bind up the brokenhearted, for He has bound up my broken heart. The case is proven to me, come and experience the same conviction within yourselves."

Moreover, and perhaps there is force in this which has not been noticed, she says, "Come, see," as much as to say, "*You may come, I know*, for when I came to the well, He did not look daggers at me. And when I did not give Him water, He did not grow hot with me and say, 'Disrespectful woman, I will not speak to you.' No, but I was at home with Him in a moment. Come; see a man who made Himself so at home with me that He told me all that ever I did. I am sure He must be the Messiah. The Messiah is to come to open the blind eyes, and He must necessarily be among the blind to perform the miracle. He is to fetch prisoners out of prison, and they that are in prison are the lowest class, and yet He goes to them. So, come along. I will go first, and introduce you to Him."

That is the woman's little speech, and how good it is! I am going to add a bit to it which she did not know, but which we know. I wish I knew how to say something that would make you unconverted ones hurry to Christ, but if anything ought to do so it is this. Suppose you never do come to Christ in this life, and die without Him? God grant you may not die without having listened to Him and received Him, but if you do, you will be awakened at the last day from your grave with the blast of a terrible trumpet, and with the cry of, "Come to judgment! Come to judgment! Come away!" Whether you will or not, you will have to come, and see a man sitting upon the great white throne, judging the nations. And do you know what He will do with you then? He will tell you all things that ever you did, and as the scenes pass before your mind's eye, and as your own words go ringing again through your ears, you will be sorely distressed. Perhaps this morning's scene will be revived before you, and conscience will tell you, "You were at the Tabernacle that morning. The gospel was put plainly to you, by one who in his heart longed for you to be saved, but you did despite to all those entreaties and turned away." I tell you it will be your hell, for Jesus to tell you all things that ever you did, and you will then see the argument, "Is not this the Christ?" But alas, He will be no Savior to you, for you refused Him. He will then tell you, "I called, but you refused. I stretched out My hands, but no man regarded." Still shall proceed that awful tale of all things that ever you did, concluding with this—you refused mercy, you rejected Jesus, you turned away from salvation, you would not have this man to save you, and therefore have you come to have your past made the fuel for your everlasting burning. God grant that no one here may ever come to that. No, if I had the task to select one man out of this congregation that would have to spend an eternity in having his life rehearsed to him, where should I find him? No, I cannot see one that I dare to pitch upon, not one—not one,—not even the worst man or woman here. I would not if I could. O God, of Your mercy suffer no one here to know the terror of being driven away forever from Your presence and the glory of your power, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOHN 4:1-42.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—257, 239, 491.**

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